

## **Powerful Dads and Pretty Daughters**

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Several years ago, I came home from work to find my husband and daughters playing outside. They beckoned me to join them and excitedly said they had something to show me. Joining them, I watched in amazement as our two-year-old scampered up the 7-foot rock wall on the playset, turned around and waved. I then learned it was my husband who had taught her to do this. As I applauded and praised her, I was thinking about how to approach him. What was he thinking? In truth, he had done nothing wrong. He was just being a dad.

Dads have a tendency to push the limits and push their children. When it is done with encouragement and patience, the children's confidence grows and their limits are stretched. They are more willing to try new things and accept challenges. Dads have a tremendous amount of influence in the lives of their daughters. Research has shown that fathers have a greater impact than mothers on their daughter's ability to have academic and career success, deal with people in authority, try new things and accept challenges, express anger appropriately, have good mental health, have self-confidence and self-reliance and to create a loving, trusting relationship with a man.

Dads teach their daughters how to regard themselves. It is through his eyes that daughters first see themselves. If he treats his daughter as being worthy, feminine and pretty, she is more likely to see herself that way. Likewise, if he treats her as being unworthy and unappealing, she is more likely to see herself that way, too. This type of treatment predisposes girls to suffer self-esteem problems later in life. It is through the father-daughter relationship that daughters first learn to either value and accept themselves or to discount and reject themselves.

Dads also teach their daughters what to expect in male –female relationships. Most psychologists predict that future romantic relationships will be greatly impacted by the father's treatment of his daughter. If her father is warm, considerate and caring, she will most likely expect men to be warm, caring and nurturing. In romantic relationships, she is more likely to look for a partner that will treat her well. When there is appropriate physical touch between a father and his daughters, they learn to feel secure and relaxed. Daughters learn to be regarded as people and not as sex objects. If the father is harsh, rejecting or dismissive, daughters will be predisposed to being involved in abusive relationships. When dads show their daughters respect and treat them with dignity, they learn to expect to be shown respect. Additionally, the way the father treats his wife serves as an example of what is acceptable in marriage.

A father's role is not easy. His words and actions make a powerful impact on his children. Our Heavenly Father can have a greater impact though. When earthly fathers disappoint, and they do at times, God is faithful.

Sources

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